SUNO Boycott Due to Continue

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Students at Southern University in New Orleans will continue their already lengthy boycott of classes past Jan. 3 if necessary — despite a threat that the school could be turned into something other than a university.

SUNO student body President Earl Picard said yesterday the boycott of classes at the Gentilly campus is 96 per cent effective and will continue because of inaction on the part of the governor and the state Board of Education.

Enoch Nix, president of the board, has said that if students do not return to classes by Jan. 3, the board will recommend that the state find another use for the SUNO campus.

Picard rebuked the threat, saying that "Southern has a service to offer to the black community. It won't close down because the black community won't let it."

Southern campuses in Baton Rouge and New Orleans were shut down after a violent confrontation with police in Baton Rouge Nov. 16 in which two students were killed.

The Baton Rouge campus was closed until Jan. 3, but the SUNO campus reopened Nov. 27, and classes have been lightly attended since that time.

Picard said that his group has stopped attempting to persuade students who want to attend classes not to do so. Some students who backed the boycott had been photographing students attending classes and tape-recording conversations.

At a press conference yesterday, Picard said he met with students for two hours. He said the boycott has "dragged on" because "the power-mad governor and an insensitive board of education" have done nothing to implement their demands.

Picard said Gov. Edwin Edwards was invited to meet with students on the campus yesterday morning but refused because of the continuing boycott.

The Board of Education, Picard said, has canceled all of its meetings since the boycott began. He said students agreed to meet with the board last week, "but at the last minute they canceled it."

SUNO students are now calling for the establishment of an all-black board of governors for the Southern University system in addition to proposed departmental and executive councils.

Picard charged that state officials involved in the situation "have shown they don't care about the lives or the futures of the students."

SUNO officials Tuesday said they had expelled 11 students for unauthorized use of the Science Lecture Hall. Picard said he believes he is one of those expelled, but he was not at home to sign for a letter when it was delivered.